vessel had visited before and from 1788 on these fishing grounds were actively worked.[16]

Inevitably some of the products which were staples of the Matsumae income decreased. According to the *Tsugaru Ittoshi*, the chief staples of the Matsumae were gold dust, hawks, dried salmon, herring, herring roe, strung shells, *Mabô* [the fourteen best hip feathers of a full grown eagle, used for arrows], *Neppu* (according to the *Matsumae Ezo Ki* a large seal), *Kotsuhi* (according to the *Matsumae Ezo Ki* a female seal), seal, bearskin, deerskin, salt fish, storks, fish oil, dried cod, sea otter skin, red tangle, salmon trout, etc. By 1669 the gold dust was exhausted and its mining prohibited.[17] Hawks became scarce and by the mid-eighteenth century there were but 22 or 23 among the 390 hunting grounds owned by the clan where hawks could be caught.[18] By 1720 the clan was complaining that "The products of this country and of Ezo are decreasing every year. Previously there was an annual sale of some 3,000 ryô in hawks but hawks are scarce, mining has been stopped and the financial condition is becoming worse."[19] The *SGM* says: "Recently no deerskins are being produced. There are still some deer left but fearing that if these few are caught there would then be none they are left alone." By 1735 the number of deer decreased even further.[20] Seals became less in number.[21] The economic staples of the Matsumae trade prior to the *Basho* system had been limited in quantity. Only if new areas were opened up could sufficient quantities of goods come on the market. That production which increased through the efforts of the *Basho* contractors was marine because it could be increased not only by the opening of new areas but by more efficient methods of production and operation.

The original method of the contractors was to trade with the natives on equal terms for those peculiarly native goods which could be sold in the markets of Japan. From the standpoint of barter it was more profitable to trade the cheapest possible goods to the natives and sell the native products for the highest price obtainable in the mainland markets. The contractors, taking advantage of the ignorance of the Ezo, often committed fraud while at the same time, in the mainland markets, they held a monopoly of the Ezo trade, but, as the Ainu became more attentive to business and as the number of competitive contractors increased, the profit from the barter method fell off and the mer-

[16] Hidaya Kyûki (The records of Hidaya Kyuhei).
[17] *Hokkaidô Shi* 1: 152.
[18] *Ibid.*, 142.
[19] *Matsumae Nennen Ki* (Annual records of the Matsumae), November, 1720.
[20] "In recent years the deer in this region have been almost wiped out and it is said that what few remain have crossed the sea from East Ezo to lands in the South. Consequently very few are left in East Ezo." *Igen Zokuwa*.
[21] "The Ezo hunt and fish for eagle feathers, bearskin, sealskin, male and female seals, herring, salmon, codfish, whale and abalone. All of these are extremely rare these days." *SGM*

was able to gain profit from that commerce. The Matsumae situation is similar to that of the Andō who occupied the important port of Jusanminato.*

Originally the trade was one of barter in the form of giving and receiving gifts. There was, at first, no interference with the Ezo. The relation between native and Japanese was equal. Those from Japan were restricted to certain areas, free passage into Ezo territory was not granted and in business transactions only the Japanese were bound by regulations. However, as the power of the Japanese grew, they not only used fraud and trickery to gain their profits but, in order to increase these profits, they resorted to the use of economic pressure or even sheer power. The Ezo were forbidden to trade with other than designated merchants. They were forbidden to remove from a limited area. They were deprived of their agriculture for the benefit of the Japanese and were even forbidden to use the Japanese language.

The standard of Ezo industrial techniques was low and with the gradual decrease of natural resources and despite the constant opening of new areas the limit of productivity was reached by the end of this period. Improvement in techniques became a necessity. Specialists from the mainland were sent for but since there was a limit to both quality and quantity this move failed and the only industries left were lumbering, hawk-hunting, and alluvial gold mining. The turn in affairs came with the importation of capital which brought into play new methods of production and organization. The consequent demand for labor could not be satisfied by immigration and was therefore supplied by the Ezo who had become the economic defeated and who now, either voluntarily or by force, were brought into this new economic system as laborers and dependents. Although the new techniques were a considerable improvement, they required no high degree of ability, and it was therefore very profitable to use the Ezo as cheap labor. Thus, the profit of the mainlanders, formerly derived from trade transactions, was now obtained by the use of productive labor. Ezo-land thus gradually became transformed from a commercial colony to an exploited colony where, through the forces of capital, management, and native labor, products for export were made.

This new system was introduced by mainland merchants who assumed the place of the Matsumae as buffer between the Japanese and the Ezo and this transfer of function is important. The change from commercial to exploited colony was also significant in the government of the Ezo. In those days when only peaceful relations were needed there was no need to interfere in Ezo affairs and "all matters in Ezo were settled according

* From the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries the Andō clan had dominated the northern end of Honshu and the Shimonokuni group of that clan had centered its power at the port of Jusanminato at the mouth of the Iwaki River.